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Secretary for
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State Water Resources Control Board

Division of Water Rights
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NOTICE OF PETITION FOR TEMPORARY CHANGE INVOLVING THE TRANSFER OF UP TO 6,300 ACRE-FEET OF WATER TO AREAS WITHIN THE WESTLANDS WATER DISTRICT UNDER CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES' PERMIT 16482 (APPLICATION 17512)

Notice is hereby given that on April 1, 2003

Department of Water Resources
c/o Nancy Quan, Chief
Project Water Contracts Branch
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001

filed with the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB), a Petition for Temporary Change under Water Code section 1725, et seq. If approved, the Westlands Water District (WWD), the majority of which is served solely by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project (CVP), would be temporarily added to the authorized place of use under the Department of Water Resources' (DWR) permitted Application 17512. Temporary changes under Water Code section 1725 may be effective for a period up to one year.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSFER

State Water Project (SWP) water is stored in San Luis Reservoir and held for use in the service areas of SWP contractors including the Tulare Lake Basin Water Storage District (Tulare). DWR proposes a change in place of use to facilitate the transfer of up to 6,300 acre-feet (af) of Tulare's SWP water entitlement to WWD. Vista Verde Farms (VVF) and Newton Farms (NF) own 3,461 acres and 875 acres of property, respectively, within WWD's service area. These landowners wish to exchange up to 6,300 af of SWP water currently scheduled for use on their land holdings within Tulare's service area, to their landholdings within WWD. Water deliveries to VVF will be used for irrigation in 2003. Water delivered to NF lands will be used for irrigation during 2003 and for pre-irrigation prior to the end of March 2004.

The total allotment of irrigation water within the area of interest would be approximately 1.8 acre-feet per acre (af/ac) for VVF lands in WWD and 4.42 for NF lands in WWD. In the absence of the proposed transfer, the water would be used by the aforementioned parties on lands located within Tulare.

STATUS OF DWR'S WATER RIGHT

Permit 16482 was issued to DWR on September 26, 1972, and it authorizes DWR to collect up to 1,100,000 af per annum by storage, to be diverted from the Sacramento and San Joaquin watersheds; and San Luis Creek between January 1 and December 31. The water may be used for irrigation, domestic, municipal, industrial, salinity control, recreation, fish and wildlife enhancement, and to generate incidental power. The subject 6,300 af of SWP water is already stored in San Luis Reservoir or will be stored under provisions of DWR's permits, conditions set forth in the 1995 Bay-Delta water quality objectives, SWRCB Order WR 98-9, and Biological Opinions issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Marine Fisheries under the Endangered Species Act. Thus, the transfer of up to 6,300 af to WWD should have no affect on any natural streamflow or hydrologic regime. Release rates from San Luis Reservoir may increase due to the proposed transfer.

STATUS OF WWD'S PROJECT

WWD's service area is located primarily east of Interstate 5, between the cities of Mendota and Kettleman City, in Fresno and Kings Counties; being within T13-22S, R12-19E, MDB&M. For contractual purposes WWD has defined its service area as Priority Areas I, II, and III. Priority Area I is WWD's original service area; Priority Area II includes lands from the June 1965 merger of WWD and the Westplains Water Storage District; and Priority Area III is considered as any lands annexed after June 1965.

- Priority Area I lands have the right to apply for and purchase up to 900,000 af of CVP contract water. There are approximately 339,000 acres of land in Area I that are irrigable and eligible, under federal reclamation law, to receive CVP water. Consequently, Priority Area I lands receive an average application rate of 2.7 af per acre under 100% CVP allocation.
- Priority Area II lands have the right to apply for and purchase up to 250,000 af of CVP contract water. There are approximately 193,000 acres of land that are irrigable and eligible, under federal reclamation law, to receive CVP water. Consequently, Priority Area II lands receive an average application rate of 1.3 af per acre under 100 percent CVP allocation.
- Priority Area III, consists of approximately 10,000 acres of irrigable land, but has no entitlement to CVP contract water.

In general, land in WWD has complete tailwater control within each field. WWD's pipeline distribution system and landowners' irrigation systems in WWD have been documented as one of

the more efficient systems available in California to minimize the amount of water applied to crops. The water planned for delivery to WWD will serve 875 acres in the southern portion of Priority Area I and 3,461 acres in the western portion of Priority Area II. All lands receiving water from this transfer are located, for the most part, west of the California Aqueduct (except Sections 10, 15, and 16, T20S, R18E) and no further north or west than T17S, R15E.

The WWD's current CVP allocation is 60% of its contract entitlement. Considering the low CVP allotment, the transfer of 6,300 acre-feet should not significantly increase discharges of either surface or subsurface agricultural drainage to the San Joaquin River watershed. In addition, WWD has programs to encourage water conservation and reduce deep percolation. This SWP water transfer to WWD will be delivered to Priority I and II Areas, as shown on the attached map (dated March 25, 2003) submitted by DWR with the petition.

COMPLIANCE WITH CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

Temporary changes involving the transfer of water that was previously stored are exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). However, the SWRCB must consider potential impacts to other legal users of the water and to fish, wildlife, or other instream beneficial uses.

SWRCB'S STATUTORY PROVISIONS

Pursuant to Water Code sections 1725, et seq., the SWRCB is authorized to issue temporary change orders, allowing the transfer or exchange of water or water rights after completing an evaluation and finding that the proposed temporary changes:

1. Involves only water that would otherwise have been consumptively used or stored by permittee or licensee;
2. Would not injure any legal user of the water; and
3. Would not unreasonably affect fish, wildlife, or other instream beneficial uses.

If the SWRCB cannot satisfy, in a timely manner, the provisions of Water Code section 1725, et. seq., then the SWRCB may deny the petition or schedule and notice a hearing regarding the proposed transfer or exchange of water.

OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMENTS

Pursuant to the requirements outlined above, the SWRCB is seeking information to assist in the evaluation of the proposed temporary change of water rights under the transfer. Any person may file comments concerning the petition for temporary change. The comments must address the required findings numbered 2. and 3., set forth above. The petitioner has the burden of establishing that the proposed temporary change will not injure any legal user of water, or

unreasonably affect fish, wildlife, or instream beneficial uses. If the SWRCB determines that the petitioner has established a prima facie case, the burden of proof then shifts to the party that has filed comments (Water Code section 1727). While such a determination has not been made in this case, commentors should provide sufficient information to support claims of injury or affects on fish, wildlife, or other instream uses.

Comments filed in response to this notice must be received in the office of the SWRCB's Division of Water Rights, at the address listed below by **3:00 p.m. on May 16, 2003**.

Additionally, **the response must be accompanied by proof of service of a separate copy of the materials on the petitioner**, at the address listed below. Interested parties are encouraged to file comments by FAX and to notify the following contact persons by telephone of any materials that will be submitted. However, an original copy of all materials must be received for the SWRCB to consider your concerns.

Division of Water Rights
c/o Mark Stretars
1001 I Street, 14th Floor
P.O. Box 2000
Sacramento, CA 95812-2000
FAX: (916) 341-5400

State Department of Water Resources
c/o Nancy Quan
P.O. Box 942836
Sacramento, CA 94236-0001
FAX: (916) 653-9628

Please address questions about this notice to Mark Stretars at (916) 341-5389. Questions regarding the petitioner or transferee should be addressed as follows:

DWR-SWP (petitioner): Nancy Quan (916) 653-9593
FAX: (916) 653-9628

WWD (transferee): Thomas Birminigham (559) 241-6241
FAX: (559) 241-6277

EDWARD C. ANTON, Chief
Division of Water Rights

Dated: April 11, 2003